



MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release 21 April

Aged care sector hopeful health reforms will address postcode healthcare

The aged care sector is hopeful that the Government's health and disability reforms will address inequities in access to care for older people that have plagued the sector under the District Health Board system.

New Zealand Aged Care Association (NZACA) Chief Executive Simon Wallace says sector research in 2018 highlighted the issue of postcode healthcare with over half the country's DHBs delaying access to rest homes for older people who need it.

"Right now, we're seeing this inequity play out with the significant variability in the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine by DHBs with some older people in rest homes not going to get it until 31 May whilst others have already had it.

"Another inequity that we are disappointed not to see addressed in the announcements today is pay parity for registered nurses working in rest homes with their counterparts in public hospitals. This was a recommendation of the Health and Disability System Review and is an issue we will be continuing to advocate strongly for through the process ahead."

Mr Wallace says it is pleasing to see the aged care sector recognised in the Government's reforms as a core part of the primary and community care system, but the detail is yet to come.

"A priority for us will be to ensure a seamless transition from DHBs to Health NZ that does not disrupt the delivery of care to the more than 36,000 older people who are in our care. That is paramount."

Mr Wallace says the sector is looking forward to working with the Government on developing the detail.

“The aged care sector is already delivering on the Government’s ambitions in today’s announcements to support more convenient care closer to home for all New Zealanders and to reduce the burden on hospitals.

“With 40,000 beds in some 600 plus rest homes around the country, including smaller and rural communities, we are providing hospital-level care that is not only significantly easing the burden on our public hospitals but saving them a staggering \$5.5 billion annually.

“We want to work with the Government to ensure the sector is supported as a partner in continuing to play a central role in the future of healthcare in New Zealand.”

ENDS

For more information contact:

Simon Wallace 027 4882850

www.nzaca.org.nz